2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries." [1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic [illegible] of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, P. 362. Cf. P. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	*1843*
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190.

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 30 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.